

January 15, 1998

OFF-SITE RESEARCH

1. **PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive clarifies the position of the Office of Research and Development on the performance of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) funded research in sites other than VA medical centers and VA leased space.

2. **BACKGROUND:** The research program within the VA is an intramural program derived from clinician observation of the health problems and needs of veterans. The opportunity to explore research based upon these observations in laboratory and other appropriate settings within the VA medical center has provided a strong foundation for this program. In recent years, the need to perform certain types of research in unique facilities not available in some VA medical centers has occurred. The inability of some VA medical centers to provide sufficient or appropriate space and facilities for research has resulted in requests from many VA medical centers to allow investigators to perform their research off-site, frequently in laboratories at affiliated institutions. Many of these requests were granted and important research has been accomplished in these off-site facilities. As a result of this policy the VA research program now has the appearance to those outside the system as having an extramural component. This appearance that VA has both an extramural and an intramural component has created confusion which poses a threat to our research appropriation. The VA presents an intramural research program that does not have granting authority. The Office of Research and Development will review and re-evaluate VA funded research performed off-site and clarify VHA policy regarding the granting of exceptions to perform VA funded research in sites outside VA medical centers.

3. **POLICY:** It is VHA policy to ensure that VA funded research is performed in laboratory space within VA medical centers or VA leased space except when off-site facilities provide unique research opportunities.

4. ACTION

a. Effective as of this date, any investigator who applies for VA research support and who has performed or seeks permission to perform research outside of VA medical center, VA owned, or VA leased space must request a waiver to perform the research off-site from the appropriate research service at least 60 days prior to the due date for the proposal. Proposals submitted without such approval will be returned without review. If a submission requires a letter of intent (LOI), permission to perform all or part of the research off-site should be requested as part of the LOI. Considerations for granting a waiver to perform research off-site will include the:

(1) Importance of the research to the VA research portfolio and mission;

(2) Availability of a suitable performance site within VA space; and

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(3) Conditions of any formal sharing agreements that will or have been negotiated for the research space or facility.

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NOTE: *Where appropriate, transitional plans for the movement of research programs to VA space will be considered. Granting of waivers to perform VA funded research off-site will be at the discretion of the Chief Research and Development Officer.*

b. Principal investigators on mentored awards such as Career Development awards or Medical Research Entry Program (MREP) awards (formerly Type II Merit Review awards) may train in mentors' laboratories that are off-site. However, they may not establish new off-site laboratories and are expected to establish a research laboratory within VA space at the conclusion of the training period as a condition of the award.

NOTE: *Failure to comply with the policies stated in this memorandum could result in the immediate withdrawal of VA research funding for the programs in question.*

c. Inquiries. For further information, contact:

(1) Medical Research:	Gregory Crowe	202 273-8912
(2) Health Services Research:	Joseph Gough	202 273-8254
(3) Rehabilitation R&D:	Jon Peters	410 962-1800 Ext 225

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Office of Research and Development (12) is responsible for the contents of this directive..

7. RESCISSIONS: None. This VHA Directive expires January 15, 2003.

S/ by Thomas Garthwaite, M.D. for
Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.
Under Secretary for Health

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